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CONFERENCE**

***" Sustainable Cities and Public Transport
Bringing Quality to Life"***

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***Sustainability as an important part of the corporate policy of a
Public Transport company***

1. Biographical note

Winfried Oelmann is the Strategic Planning Officer of the Dresdner Verkehrsbetriebe AG (DVB) since 2002. In this position he is also involved in the process of DVB's sustainable development.

Additional he is responsible for the coordination of DVB's freight tram (CarGoTram) and the head of a project concerning the further development of DVB's Operations Control System.

After transport engineering studies at the Dresden University he was project manager in a consultancy from 1989 until 1999. Then he changed to Deutsche Bahn AG in a project for the acquisition of public transport companies in Eastern Germany. From 2001 until 2002 he was the quality manager of the Chemnitzer Verkehrs-AG.

He is married and has three children.

2. Abstract

During the 55th UITP World Congress in Madrid in May 2003 Dresdner Verkehrsbetriebe AG (DVB) signed the "UITP Charter on Sustainable Development". So the company was one of the first signatories.

In its two years period as a pledge signatory, DVB drew up ten action lines for implementing sustainable development based on the guidelines for a sustainable corporate policy of DVB. The presentation is designed to shed some light on a company's view on sustainable development using the example of DVB. The message is that the main interest of a PT company should be to develop and maintain PT as a real alternative for mobility and not to serve a market niche. In this case the inclusion of principles for sustainable development in the corporate policy provides the PT company with the opportunity of creating advantages in the competition with the private car, stimulating demand for our mobility services and therefore safeguarding the company's existence for a long term.

3. Full Text

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Dresdner Verkehrsbetriebe AG (DVB) is the public transport operator in Dresden. Dresden is the capital of the German State of Saxony. There live half a million inhabitants in the town and 1.2 million in the whole area. DVB has a daily ridership of 400.000 passengers, which adds to approximately 140 million passengers in the year. The company operates 150 trams, about 100 of them are modern low floor light rail vehicles, and 110 own low floor buses and 50 buses of subcontractors. DVB also operates four ferry lines across the Elbe river, a suspended railway and a funicular.

During the 55th UITP World Congress in Madrid in May 2003 our then Technical Director, Frank Müller-Eberstein, signed the "UITP Charter on Sustainable Development" as a pledge signatory, nine month after the devastating floods in Dresden and Saxony. So the company was one of the first charter signatories.

In order to achieve full membership, we have addressed the issue of sustainable developments at DVB with a greater degree of intensity during our two-year candidate period. This process has still not been completed and will probably never be finished because development always involves change. But we did reach a first milestone in June 2005 when our board members Hans-Jürgen Credé and Reiner Zieschank and the then UITP president Wolfgang Meyer and the UITP General Secretary Hans Rat placed their signatures beneath the charter as full member.

During our candidate period, we drew up ten action lines for implementing sustainable development based on the guidelines for a sustainable corporate policy of DVB. These action lines are simple and are therefore comprehensible to everybody. They are based on the three pillars of sustainable development: the environment, society and economy, and include most of them what we heard at this conference.

It is my task to cast further light on a company's view on sustainable development in the following speech. This restriction of course does not mean that the higher-ranking goals of sustainable development – sustainability, meeting essential needs and idea of limitations – are not the main reason also for my company. Rather as a company operating in the public transport sector, we have a significant advantage over other sectors in that the object of our business, i.e. providing sustainable forms of mobility, is part of the solution and not part of the problem. So by including the element of sustainability in our company policy, we can secure a crucial advantage in competition.

If the word "competition" is used in connection with the PT in Europe, it usually refers to internal competition between PT companies. Individual companies can create advantages for themselves by pursuing sustainable developments of course and I will briefly discuss this issue later.

From my point of view, however, the primary competition is that for customers (passengers). In this contest, PT companies are primarily competing with private car traffic and need to prove as a sector whether they are really operating in a sustainable manner to provide part of the solution. PT services reduced to the level of just being a service of general interest do not provide a really alternative to private cars. PT services as a service of general interest are a task fulfilled by the public authorities and can only create basic services. Our understanding as a company and as an entrepreneur is to develop PT so that it does not remain a service of general interest, but become a real alternative for mobility.

By using our action lines and a few examples and results in the following, I would like to explain how the general discussion about sustainability and our own preoccupation with sustainable developments at DVB have helped us.

One important company goal at DVB is to retain and win over passengers. PT as mass transit is specialised in meeting high levels of demand. Only a high level of demand can justify a high level of supply. And only by a high level of supply, can we create the necessary presence in the city landscape and demonstrate to those who are not yet our customers or rarely use our services that we are an attractive mobility alternative. Of course the income, which we receive from our customers, is essential for ensuring the ongoing existence of our company.

If we talk about winning over customers or customer loyalty, there is a rather negative demographic trend in our society which plays a crucial role regarding the PT. Therefore one of the action lines in our sustainable development plan has been to adapt DVB to the demographic trend.

Unfortunately I can only deal with how this happens by mentioning a few key terms:

- target group orientation (mascot "Leo" and children's tram "Lottchen" for the youngest travellers, mobility training for and at schools, campaigns for winning over passengers among young trainees, term tickets for the Dresden universities, job tickets for working people and the Dresden Pass with reductions supported by the city of Dresden and DVB for the socially disadvantaged etc),
- creating accessibility through the "PT for all" concept (vehicle design, infrastructure concept, information system for the blind, dismantling psychological barriers), easy changing for passengers with combined stops for buses and trams,
- regular 10 minute frequency service and all-night service, flexible services such as scheduled taxis in areas and times of low-level demand, P+R concept.

Overall it's necessary to "no longer let customers go", even if they switch to the category of those who can choose their travel mode. We wish to and have to counteract the decline in the use of PT in the life cycle in order to safeguard and expand our customer potential. We are well on the way: A few years ago we had a decreasing population in our operations area. Nevertheless we could register an increasing ridership.

Of course we were and we still are dependent on favourable general conditions. We can, for example, help to create these general conditions by clearly defining the role of PT and the PT companies to support the competitiveness of the local area.

This leads to further action lines in our sustainable development programme. We wish to play our part in expanding and maintaining PT as an advantage of location. To do this, we are focussing on the following issues:

- providing viable and efficient transport infrastructure,
- providing relief for road infrastructure to benefit essential business traffic,
- guaranteeing scheduled mobility,
- expanding environmentally-friendly logistics concepts (freight trams),
- providing adequate mobility services for new residential and commercial settlements.

At the moment we are somewhat dissatisfied with local policy, because existing efficient PT routes and infrastructures are not being taken into consideration in the correct manner. We have to detect a trend that potential demand is moved from our efficient routes and infrastructures to "green fields" and therefore to the private car traffic through the local business settlement policy. But we are in discussion with the city of Dresden about this.

Another guideline for action is boosting the economy with PT. The following key terms should be mentioned:

- transport companies as employers,
- transport companies as buyers,
- transport companies as partners of business when providing mobility services and logistics,
- transport companies as practical partners for education, science and research.

In the field of research, we took part in a project, which developed products for avoiding traffic (telecommuting) and these have now been implemented.

A further action line, with which we wish to exert a positive effect on the competitiveness of the local area and also create favourable outline conditions for local public transport services lies in maintaining the living quality for our city and region. This means:

- maintaining an intact transport system,
- expanding the system of junction points within the city, between the city and region and between the transport companies, guaranteeing connections and providing passenger information by real time data,
- reinforcing the car-free mobility (network of environmentally-friendly transport modes), the carriage of bicycles in the PT vehicles is allowed,
- intelligent traffic lights.

If our region can hold its ground and move forward in the business competition terms, as is currently the case, this also has a direct effect on our company, for a prospering economy means that there is plenty of demand for mobility, not only in the commuter traffic, but also in the leisure and shopping traffic.

Of course it depends on whether the transport company is also perceived by the general public as acting in a sustainable manner and that actions and talk are not miles apart. This problem has been and is being tackled in other lectures at this conference. Therefore I will keep my comments brief. Our guidelines for action are:

- reducing effects on the environment,

- using resources efficiently,
- communicating goals and results,
- being a force to be reckoned with in society.

The aim of these action lines is not only to achieve credibility, a positive image or to promote public opinion positively with regard to sustainable developments. For example, it is in the direct business interest of our company to use resources efficiently and this can also provide us with an advantage in the competition among PT companies. Here we can mention, for example, energy-saving and emission-reduced engines, energy recovery systems, fuel efficient manner of driving, demand dependent vehicle utilisation (different sizes of trams and buses, small buses and cars), using recycled materials, intensely use of water resources etc.

Before I conclude, I would like to go into further detail about the issue of "reducing the effects on the environment". This matter is rightly being discussed at length at the UITP Sustainability Conference. It is closely linked to the sustainability of our current actions and the idea of limitations in the Brundtland definition. The DVB attributes great importance to this matter.

With regard to the fundamental competition between public transport and private cars, in my view many discussions, demands and draft guidelines are unbalanced. Of course a clean fleet of buses with alternative engine systems and a high degree of environmental compatibility, e.g. according to the EEV standard, fit well into the picture of a sustainable alternative for mobility. However, it must also be possible to finance this high degree of environmental compatibility. It is counterproductive if a further imbalance arises in the fundamental competition between PT and private car because of the financial burden involved.

Allow me to conclude.

This lecture is designed to shed some light on a company's view on sustainable development using the example of DVB. Our main interest as a company is to develop and maintain PT as a real alternative for mobility and not to serve a market niche. Therefore our company has also a business interest in sustainable development. Based on our experiences we can say, that the inclusion of principles for sustainable development in our corporate policy provides us with the opportunity of creating advantages in the competition with the private car, stimulating demand for our mobility services and therefore safeguarding the existence of the company in a long term.

Thank you for your attention.

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